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# The Adult Department

## Its Scope and Opportunity

BY

IDA S. BLICK

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**The**  
**Adult Department:**  
**Its Scope and Opportunity**

BY

**IDA S. BLICK**

SECRETARY OF WAYNE COUNTY SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

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TO THE  
PHILATHEA CLASS OF  
THE IMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN  
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED





## Introduction

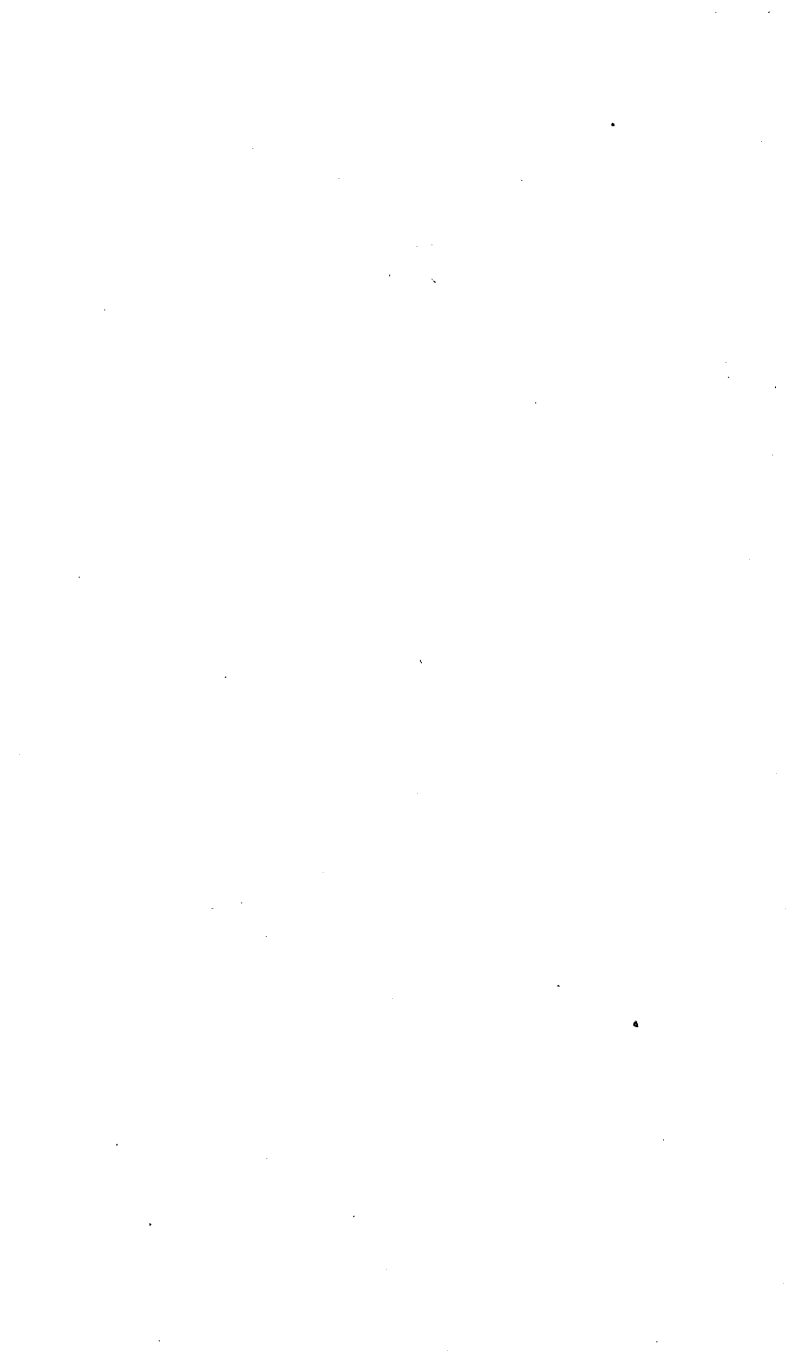
To write a book is now a common task; to write a book that fills a niche is all too uncommon. Such a book is this.

The Adult Bible Class has become an institution. Quite frequently the growth and influence of such a class become so marked as to be widely commented on; then the question is asked, How is it done?

The author of this brief book has answered the question. The book belongs to the category of "how" books. There is no essential left uncovered, no point of importance omitted. Much more might have been said, but it is not needed; that which is essential could not have been said in fewer words.

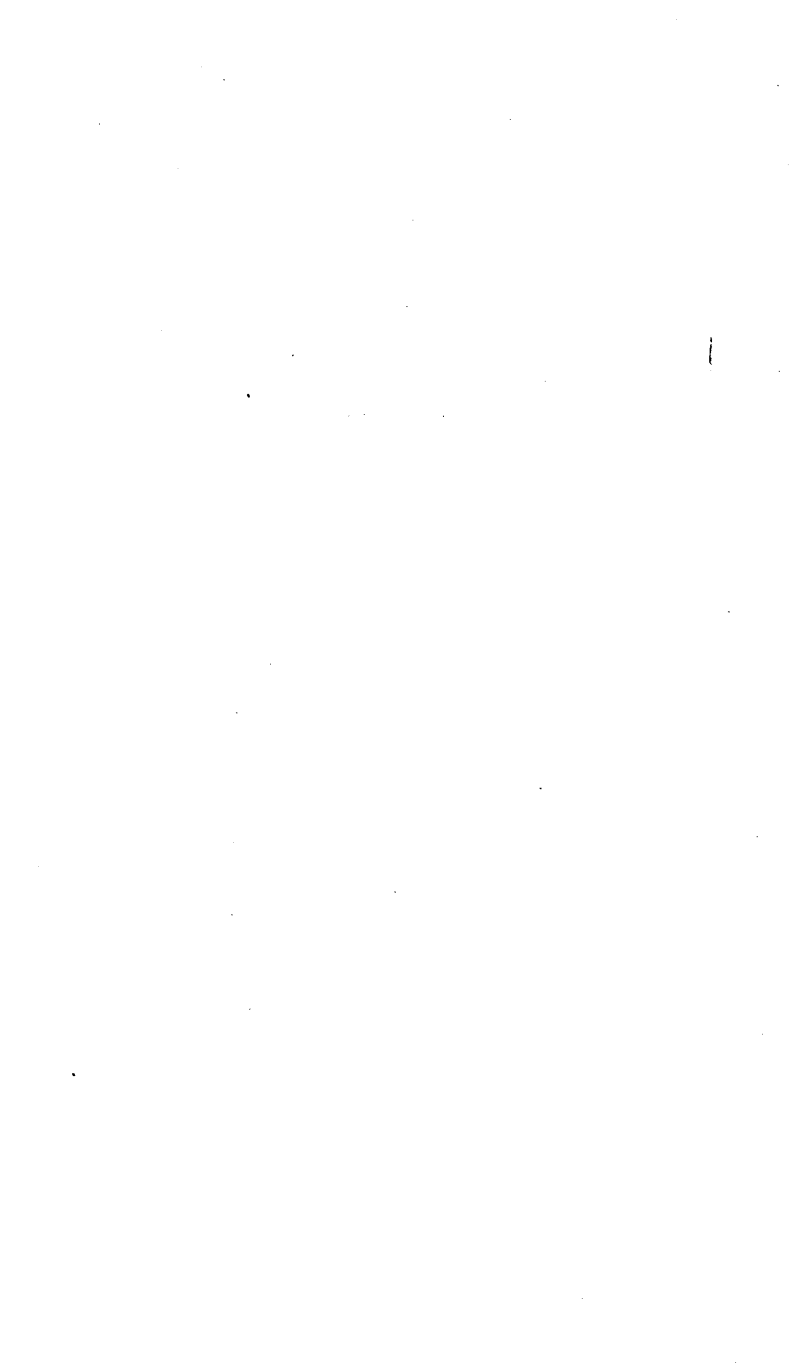
It is a textbook on adult Bible class work. It is more: it is an inspiration to better adult Bible class work. In each of these functions it has a place. It is another vital contribution to the advance of Sunday-school work; as such it will live.

EUGENE C. FOSTER



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## CHAPTER I

### **The Adult Department**

One of my earliest recollections is that of a small village Sunday school located in southern Ohio. There were just three classes in that Sunday school—the Infant Class, the Intermediate Class, and the Bible Class. The Infant Class consisted of all children under twelve years of age. These children met in one room and were taught one lesson by one teacher. The Intermediate Class was composed of both boys and girls (mostly girls) from twelve to twenty, and was also taught by one teacher. The Bible Class contained all the adults in the Sunday school, ranging in age from twenty to eighty or over.

In those days a graded Sunday school was unheard of. To separate children of three or four years of age from their brothers and sisters of ten or twelve would have been deemed foolish. As to an Intermediate or Senior Department—who ever heard of dividing into two groups the teen-age young people?

And an Adult Department—nobody ever thought of an Adult Department in the Sunday school. The Sunday school was only for children anyway, and if some eccentric grown-ups really cared to go, there was the Bible Class for them.

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To-day every well-organized Sunday school has its Adult Department, its Adult superintendent, and its Adult classes. The adult church members quite generally recognize that they have a distinct interest and responsibility toward the Sunday school, and "Every church member a member of the Bible school" has become the slogan of many schools and churches.

How did this changed condition of affairs come about? Chiefly through the demands made upon the Sunday school by the organized adult Bible class movement, the beginning of which seems to be veiled in obscurity but which has grown so rapidly that it stands to-day as one of the greatest forces in the religious world.

The Adult Department of the Sunday school properly comprises all classes whose members are twenty years of age or over. Ordinarily there should be at least four classes in every Adult Department: one for the young men and one for the young women, one for the older men and one for the older women. It is advisable to have separate classes for men and women, and also separate classes for the older and younger groups, as their interests and tastes differ. In many schools, however, a "mixed class" is conducted very successfully, and often local conditions exist which make it seem best to continue this method. A "parents' class" is a recent innovation recommended by W. C. Pearce, superintendent of the Adult Division of the International Sunday School Association. This has already been tested in many schools with great success. The members of the class bring their everyday problems for discussion

in the class, and the teacher applies the great truths of the Bible to everyday life and gives practical suggestions as to Christian training and applied Christianity in the home. In many schools mixed classes of young married people are conducted with great success. For the most part, however, separate classes for men and women prevail, and the general grouping naturally falls into the four classes specified.

The superintendent of the Adult Department should be a man or woman of earnest Christian character, who has a good working knowledge of the Bible and Bible courses of study, and who will work in complete harmony with the pastor and Sunday-school superintendent. The duty of the department superintendent is to keep in close touch with every class and class teacher in the department, to see that teachers are provided when necessary, and to be ready with practical help and suggestions at all times. He should be prepared to make a report for his department at each meeting of the Sunday-school board. He should also be in touch with the community at large and familiar with all civic affairs and city-wide movements for the public good.

In a small school it is not always possible to secure an ideal person for the superintendent of the Adult Department, and sometimes the general superintendent of the school must act in this capacity. It is wise to allow adult classes to choose their own courses of study (within certain limits), but the superintendent of the department should be consulted and his authority as well as that of the general superintendent recognized.



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In this way the whole department will work in harmony and a definite policy may be followed, not only in the Adult Department but throughout the entire school.

It seems needless to say that every class in the Adult Department should be organized according to the International Standard as well as according to its own denominational standard, with the full quota of officers and committees. The day of the Bible class which simply met on Sunday to study the lesson, or more often, to hear the teacher expound it, is past. Impression without expression is valueless, and we are living in an age of activity. The adult Bible class, to justify its existence, must be a working class, and this means that the responsibility rests not altogether on the teacher, but also upon each member of the class. Let us see how this responsibility may be divided.

## CHAPTER II

### Organization

Webster's "Unabridged" gives the following definition of "organize": "To arrange or constitute in interdependent parts, each having a special function, act, office, or relation with respect to the whole."

Organization to a Bible class is what the "assembling of parts" is to an automobile. It binds the different forces together, utilizing each in its own place, but correlating all into one complete mechanism. Each member is given a definite work to do and is made to feel that he counts for something in the class. "Ten men organized are stronger than one hundred unorganized." Organization constitutes the difference between a mob and an army, between disorder and order, between failure and accomplishment.

Organization makes the class a "stock company," instead of a one-man enterprise. An organized class gives to every member "equal rights." The members share equally in responsibility and the teacher is not "the whole thing." An unorganized class will often "go to pieces" if, for any reason, the teacher is obliged to give up the work, whereas the organized class will hustle to get another teacher, carrying on the work of

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the class in the meantime and maintaining the class spirit and interest.

Organization makes it possible for the class to "do things." It provides definite Christian activity for each member. A class which is organized according to the standards of the International Sunday School Association and its own denominational association must have at least five officers and three standing committees. Other committees and officers may be added according to the local needs. The necessary officers are teacher, president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The necessary committees are Membership, Social, and Devotional, or Missionary. It is not necessary that the committees be called by these names, but there must be committees definitely responsible for these branches of class work. In order to conform to the Standard, the class must also be definitely connected with some Sunday school, and its members should be twenty years of age or over.

An organized class should always apply for a certificate of recognition, which signifies that it is registered with its denominational board and with the State and International Sunday School associations, and is counted by these respective bodies as an organized adult Bible class. The Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and United Presbyterian churches issue what is known as a Joint Certificate, bearing the signature of the Adult superintendent of the denominational board, as well as that of W. C. Pearce, the Adult Division superintendent of the International Sunday School

Association, and Marion Lawrance, the general secretary. To apply for a certificate, a blank should be secured from the denominational headquarters, from the County Sunday School Association, or from the State Sunday School Association. This blank should be filled out with the required information and mailed according to directions with a twenty-five-cent registration fee. In return, an attractive certificate of recognition will be mailed, stating that the class is duly enrolled as an organized adult Bible class. The certificate contains space for the names of charter members of the class, and displays the adult class emblem, which is a small red circle with a white center. The significance of this emblem is, "There is no purity of life without sacrifice and no cleansing from sin without the shedding of blood." Heb. 9 : 22.

Every member of an organized adult Bible class should wear the emblem, which constitutes a bond of fellowship between members of adult classes throughout the world. The pins cost one cent each and may be secured from any Sunday-school supply house, or from the County or State Sunday School associations.

The advantages of securing a certificate for an adult Bible class are many. The certificate represents the minimum standard of organization which experience has proved effective. It brings to the class the recognition of the International, State, or Provincial Sunday School associations, and to the classes whose denominations add their seal and signature, denominational recognition as well. It brings the class into touch with the

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great adult Bible class movement of to-day, makes it eligible to join an adult Bible class federation, and asks nothing from the class except that it maintain a working standard of organization.

An organized class should have a constitution and by-laws. Sample constitutions may be secured from the denominational boards, or from the State or Provincial associations. Every class should have a name and a motto. These are valuable for advertising the class and its work. Much of the success of the Baraca-Philathea Movement is due to the significance of the names and motto, "Baraca" meaning "blessing," and "Philathea" meaning "lovers of truth," while the motto, "We Do Things," taken from Phil. 4:13, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me," is also inspiring and helpful. The platform of the Baraca-Philathea organization is also ideal: "Young men and women at work for young men and women, all standing by the Bible, the Bible school, and the Church." Surely this sounds a note of helpfulness and personal evangelism that should challenge any young man or woman. So much significance attaches to a class name and motto that each should be carefully and prayerfully chosen. Usually it is not desirable to choose the teacher's surname as the name of the class. This is likely to introduce a personal element that is not conducive to the best class spirit, and a wise teacher will not permit it unless for some very good reason. A class name should have real meaning or significance and should not be chosen for purely sentimental reasons.

The class motto should be framed and hung in the classroom, and should be referred to occasionally so that the members of the class may keep in mind the principles for which the class stands. Some classes make a practice of repeating their motto every Sunday for the benefit of new members or visitors, as well as for their own.

## CHAPTER III

### **Class Officers**

According to the standard of organization outlined in the preceding chapter, a class must have at least five officers; namely, teacher, president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Upon the wise selection of these officers depends the success of the class work. The business of the teacher is to teach the lesson and to look after the spiritual interests of the class. He should not be obliged to attend to the details of class work, or to direct the activities of the class except in a purely advisory capacity. It is needless to say, however, that the teacher should be a leader in every sense of the word, and should take part in all the activities of the class. The duties of the teacher will be treated fully in Chapter IX.

Next to the teacher the most important officer is the class president. The president may make or mar the class. With a good president the class may thrive and grow, even though the teacher may be below par. The president should be a person of executive ability. He must know how to plan work for others and see that the work planned is accomplished. This is a task that requires great tact and skill. The class president must be able to "size up" folks—to know instinctively where to

place members of the class in order to enlist their interest and their best work. He must be able to inspire others to action, to get the committee chairmen to assume responsibility without appearing to dictate to them, and, needless to say, he should at all times work in complete harmony with the teacher. The president and teacher should frequently take counsel together concerning the work of the class.

The monthly business meeting is the president's especial responsibility. He should always plan definitely for it, giving each committee chairman to understand that he expects a report of work done during the month. He should see that the program does not drag, and that it is carried out in a businesslike manner. He should urge the members of the class to attend the business meetings regularly, for that is their opportunity to have a voice in class matters.

The president should open the class session Sunday morning and make briefly any announcements that may be necessary. He may offer a short opening prayer, or call on a class member to do so, asking God's blessing on the lesson and the teacher, and remembering any class members who may be ill or in trouble. The president, however, should not occupy more than five minutes of the period at most, for this is a time that should be kept, so far as possible, sacred to the teacher.

The president should coöperate fully with the other class officers without in any way infringing on their prerogatives or assuming any of their duties. He should keep in close touch with the class secretary, securing



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names of new members and becoming personally acquainted with them. He should also be sure that the Membership Committee secures the names of all newcomers in order that they may be visited by different members of the class. In short, he must be closely in touch with every department of class work, and must direct it without being dictatorial or officious. He must have vision, but must not be visionary. He must hitch his wagon to a star, but see that the wheels remain on the ground. He must possess originality, initiative, and enthusiasm: originality to enable him to think of new plans; initiative to enable him to set them in motion; and enthusiasm to enable him to inspire others to carry them on. The president of an organized class once kept the class together through a very trying period when the class was without a teacher and when the entire church was torn by dissensions among the members. Through the wise guidance of the president the class not only maintained its usual work, but actually grew in numbers and activity. Different members in turn assumed the responsibility of leading the lesson discussion, and the class eventually succeeded in bringing about better conditions throughout the church.

The presidency of an organized adult Bible class may be just as big as the man or woman chosen is able to make it. The president may be only a figurehead, or he may be a real leader; he may be an obstacle in the path of progress, or he may have the courage of David Livingstone that will enable him to say, "Anywhere, provided it be forward." In any case he will set the

pace for the class, and upon his vision will depend the class accomplishment.

The office of vice president is often regarded as merely nominal, but this should not be the case. The president should regard the vice president as his right-hand man, frequently calling upon him for definite service, thus encouraging him and stimulating him to action. The vice president should always be prepared to take the place of the president in case of absence or resignation. Great care, therefore, should be exercised in selection. Some class constitutions provide that the vice president shall be chairman of one of the committees, notably the Missionary Committee or the Devotional Committee. This keeps him in close touch with the religious work of the class, and insures the choice of a capable, earnest worker for this office, which is too often filled in a haphazard way, on account of the feeling that "the office of vice president does not amount to much anyway." A wise president will see that the office of vice president is magnified and made to seem worth while.

The office of secretary is second only in importance to that of president. Probably everyone elected to the secretaryship of an organized class understands that he is expected to call the class roll and record the minutes of business meetings. This is but a small part of a secretary's work. His opportunities for service are limitless. One of the most important of his duties is that of keeping in touch with absentees. No absence from a class period should pass unnoticed. Special printed forms or post cards may be used when a class

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is large, but a personal note from the secretary, or one of his assistants, is much better.

Personal notes of invitation to join the class may be sent to newcomers in the vicinity, though this work should be done by members of the Membership Committee in order to relieve the secretary. The secretary should at all times work in close coöperation with the Membership Committee, and the activity of this committee will usually depend to some degree upon the activity of the secretary. Indeed, it is often wise to make the secretary chairman of the Membership Committee.

A secretary who feels the responsibility and privilege of his office will find countless opportunities for helpfulness. He may write, or cause to have written, letters to sick members of the class, or to those who are in trouble or away on a vacation, or to those who have met with some unusual success or disappointment. Like the office of the president, that of the secretary may be just as large and important as the incumbent is inclined to make it, and the secretary who takes his office seriously will be one of the potent factors in class success.

The secretary should allow nothing short of death or serious illness to keep him from the class sessions or business meetings. He should place these meetings above all other engagements in importance, and should keep an accurate record of all class transactions. Unless there is a class reporter the secretary, in coöperation with the president and teacher, should attend to press notices, but if the class is large, it is much better to have one person responsible for this phase of the work.

It is desirable to elect a class reporter, or a Publicity Committee, to attend entirely to newspaper notices and other forms of class advertising.

At the close of each session, after checking the roll, the secretary should at once confer with the Membership Committee regarding the absentees and plan to get in touch with them. If this is done every Sunday, very few members will be lost to the class through "dropping out."

The secretary should love his work and realize its importance. He should be systematic, painstaking, accurate, and faithful. There are many virtues desirable in a class secretary, but the greatest is faithfulness.

The class treasurer is also an important factor in the life of the class. He is the business head of the class. The question of class finances is often difficult and not always welcome. The request, "Please see the treasurer," sometimes falls on deaf ears, and it is often necessary for the treasurer to see the members, and gently but firmly remind them of their obligations. For this reason, the treasurer should be aggressive, without being dictatorial, persistent, without becoming a nuisance, wise as a serpent in handling difficult financial problems. He should be fully aware of the importance of class finances, yet he should not keep the financial side continually uppermost. Good judgment is especially necessary in pressing upon the class, either collectively or individually, their various obligations. The subject of class finances will be fully treated in another chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Duties of Committees**

A class committee must have a clearly defined purpose. It must not only have a reason for existing, but the members of the committee must know what that reason is. It should have a definite aim and a definite program by which the aim may be realized.

The constitution of the class should clearly outline the duties of each committee. The president should see that each committee chairman realizes fully the responsibility that rests upon him and his committee. The president and other officers, together with all the committee chairmen, should constitute an Executive Committee, or cabinet, which should hold frequent meetings in order that class plans may be discussed and understood. Only in this way will the committees be able to work in harmony and without duplication of effort.

The president and the teacher of the class are, of course, ex officio members of all committees and should meet with them whenever possible. In a large class, however, this will often entail real hardship on both. If, however, a cabinet meeting is held at least once a month, the president and teacher can discuss problems and formulate plans with the officers and committee

chairmen, which may later be laid before the committees, or the entire class, if necessary, for decision and action.

When any piece of work is "committed to a committee," it should be left there. Each committee should be held responsible for the accomplishment of its own work. A successful president will not be always "nagging" the committee chairmen, but will in a tactful way impress each with the feeling that he will be held responsible for the work of his committee, or for its failure to "deliver the goods." This should be made very clear at the annual meeting when the election of officers and appointment of committee chairmen take place. A strong statement should be made regarding the work expected from each committee, and the chairmen and members should be given to understand, in a perfectly polite way, of course, that if they do not "make good," they will be asked to resign. Nothing so hampers the effective work of a class as "dead" committees or chairmen.

The International Standard of organization for adult Bible classes requires three standing committees, which are designated as Membership, Social, and Devotional-Missionary. As stated before, it is not necessary that the committees bear these names, provided that these three phases of the class activities are cared for.

The Membership Committee should be responsible for securing new members, looking up absentees, and visiting the sick or shut-ins. This committee is responsible for the maintenance of the class attendance and may call on any members of the class to assist in the

work. Some classes, especially large classes, divide the Membership Committee into two parts, one section to look after the delinquent members of the class, or absentees, and the other section to secure new members. Sometimes these are called by other names, such as the Delinquent and Hustlers' committees, or the Visiting and Look-Out committees. In a large class such a division of the work would be wise, as two distinct forms of service are represented and no overlapping of effort need exist. An enterprising Hustlers', or Look-Out, Committee would have its members at the church doors both before and after every service, handing out invitation cards to strangers and securing names and addresses of those eligible for the class. These prospective members should be given immediate attention and no stone should be left unturned to win them. The Membership Committee of a large class of young men, in a church situated in a rapidly growing community, stations four of its members at each door of the church every Sunday morning. One stands at the top of the steps leading to the vestibule, another just inside the door of the vestibule, the third at the door of the church, and the fourth at the entrance of the aisle. If a strange young man mounts the steps, the first to greet him is the look-out man at the top. He shakes hands, gets the stranger's name, and invites him to come to the class. As the stranger passes on, the man at the door is given a signal by the first, signifying that the stranger is a "prospect." He is on the alert to greet the stranger with outstretched hand and another invitation to join the

class. The process is repeated by the third man and the fourth man, and before the stranger is seated he has had at least four invitations to join this particular class. Usually he joins.

The Social Committee, as the name implies, is responsible for the social life of the class. The members of this committee should plan socials and entertainments and do everything possible to develop the social instinct in the members of the class. They should also make it a point to greet newcomers on Sunday and to see that they are made to feel at home in the class and invited to any class functions that may be planned for the ensuing week. The chairman of this committee must be a good mixer and one who has some ingenuity in planning socials and good times.

The Devotional, or Missionary, Committee is charged with the development of the religious life of the class. This may be accomplished through special class prayer meetings, personal work among the class members or in the community, securing the attendance of the class members upon the church services, and interesting them in some form of special missionary activity or in any line of definite Christian service. It seems scarcely necessary to say that the chairman of this committee should be a devout, earnest Christian, whose spiritual life is deep and sincere.

The officers and the committee chairmen constitute the real backbone of the class. Upon this group the growth and welfare of the class will depend. An earnest, consecrated Executive Committee, or cabinet, will



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certainly insure an active, enthusiastic, growing, evangelistic class.

Other standing or special committees may be appointed as class needs may demand. A class of young women has a "Pollyanna" Committee, whose duty it is to look for the "glad" things and report them to the class. This committee places a glass jar on the table in the classroom every Sunday and the members who are glad for any special reason deposit a contribution. The money is used by the Flower Committee for the sick members of the class or congregation.

A similar plan was followed by another class whose members were in the habit of meeting weekly for prayer before the Sunday-school session. They maintained what was called a "Blessings Box," and those who felt thankful for some special blessing which had come to them during the week contributed to this box. The fund raised in this manner was used to purchase a very beautiful picture of Christ, which was hung in the chapel of the Florence Crittenden Home.

Every member should have some definite duty or responsibility, and should feel that some part of the class work depends upon his faithfulness. This is the secret of maintaining interest among the members. Everyone likes to feel that he is of some consequence in his part of the world and that he has a work to perform. A man or woman will often retain interest in a Bible class simply because he or she has been given something to do, and this interest may lead later to a deeper and more lasting and vital connection.

## CHAPTER V

### **Aims of the Adult Bible Class**

The primary aim of the adult Bible class is to study the Bible. This is the first essential. The name, "adult Bible class," is a misnomer if the class does not study the Bible. If a class of real Bible students is developed, activity will follow as a matter of course. The Bible Christian is the active Christian and the class that really studies the Bible will eventually develop a spirit of service.

A college professor once said that the ignorance of the average college student regarding the Bible is deep and profound. This statement will apply equally to many church members. Members of adult Bible classes should be workers that need not be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. A member of a young women's Bible class once said that until she became a member of the class she had never understood the significance of those lines in "The Vision of Sir Launfal" which read:

"Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,  
We Sinais climb and know it not."

This girl was a high-school graduate, but she knew little or nothing of the Bible until she joined an adult Bible class. She soon developed a genuine love for

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the Word, which was followed by a fine spirit of activity and desire for service. Expression follows impression as surely as dawn follows the night. A desire for definite service follows real Bible study.

Studying the Bible, however, means something more than merely meeting on Sunday to hear the teacher expound the lesson as he may understand it or interpret it, no matter how able he may be. The real Bible class is composed of genuine Bible students who not only bring their Bibles to the class, but do their own reading and studying at home; who are not content to take the teacher's say-so about the lesson, but will dig for themselves and discover the golden nuggets of truth with which the Word is filled. This sort of Bible class will surely develop the true spirit of service. This constitutes the second great aim of the Bible class.

Service in a Bible class, as in an individual, must not be for itself alone. "No class liveth unto itself," and the more a class puts into the Sunday school, the church, the community, the more will its members receive in ultimate benefit for themselves. I have known a teacher of an adult Bible class to resent it when the Sunday-school superintendent has called on the class to furnish teachers. This is a wrong and selfish spirit. An adult Bible class is the logical recruiting ground for teachers. The members who leave the class to teach, however, should always be retained as honorary members of the class, should be invited to all class functions, and made to feel that they are still a part, and a very vital part, of the class. Some classes have honor rolls

hung in their classrooms bearing the names of those who have gone forth to serve in the Sunday school.

The third great aim of the adult Bible class is personal evangelism. "What doth it profit a class if it gain the entire community into its membership and not one be led to accept Christ as his personal Saviour?" As Andrew found Simon and Philip found Nathanael, in their eagerness to tell of their meeting with Christ, so members of an adult Bible class who have found the Master should gladly hasten to tell others. The "Win One" method is best. More can be accomplished by concentrating on one individual at a time and giving to that one earnest, untiring, prayerful effort than by any number of general invitations. In an adult Bible class soul-winning should not be regarded as the responsibility of the teacher alone. Every member of the class who is a Christian should feel that he has a personal responsibility for others and should consider himself a committee of one to concentrate on some individual either in or out of the class and eventually lead him to accept Christ. Henry Clay Trumbull said, "Reaching one person at a time is the best way to reach all the world in time." The best way to win a whole class to Christ is to win one at a time, and with each one a helper in the extension of the Kingdom is gained.

With Bible study, service, and personal evangelism, the Bible class will be a success in the highest and deepest sense of the word.

## CHAPTER VI

### **Courses of Study**

In the preceding chapter the fact has been emphasized that the primary aim of the adult Bible class is to study the Bible. To assist us in this there are a great many textbooks and studies provided. In fact, had the wise man lived in this day and generation he might well have said, "Of making many Bible-study textbooks there shall be no end." When choosing a course, however, there are certain broad and never-changing principles to be kept in mind.

1. The general policy of the school as a whole. If the school is graded, as most Sunday schools are to-day, the Adult Department curriculum should be based on the courses that have gone before. "The Adult Department curriculum should be a part of the larger curriculum of the school. The curriculum of the school should be a unit, a related whole."\* Any special course desired by an adult Bible class should be approved by the superintendent and the pastor of the church.

2. The personnel of the class. A course that might be very desirable for a class composed of middle-aged business men might be utterly unsuited to a class of

\* Barclay, "The Adult Worker and His Work."

college students, and a course that would appeal strongly to a group of young business women might not be interesting to a class of married women. Many Bible classes are made up of people having a wide range of interest and great diversity of thought, and for these classes courses of general interest should be chosen. As this is sometimes difficult, it is better as a rule to have separate classes for men and women, and to separate also the older and younger groups.

3. The object to be attained. It is assumed that every adult Bible class is studying with some definite aim in view. If the aims of the adult class are conceded to be Bible study, service, and personal evangelism, then courses of Bible study should be selected that will not only inspire to service but will also train for service. At least one adult class in the Sunday school should be organized as a teacher-training class, but whether this is done or not, the adult Bible class is always called upon more or less for supply teachers. This is a feature which should be kept in mind when selecting courses of study, especially for young men and young women.

Many adult classes to-day are using the International Uniform Lessons. These are excellent, and an abundance of material bearing on these lessons can always be obtained. Other classes select special courses which, for various reasons, seem better fitted to their needs.

Men's classes very often elect some course relating to existing world conditions, and a book such as Doughty's "The Call of the World," or Speer's "The

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Unity of the Americas," may often be chosen for a special short-term course. While these books are not specifically Bible-study books, they are excellent present-day commentaries on the Bible, and direct Biblical applications may be made, showing the connection between the Bible and conditions in the world to-day. Men are interested in up-to-date questions, and the Bible is interesting to the average man more because of its present-day applications than because of its historical value. "Poverty and Wealth," by Henry Ward, is another valuable book for a men's class. "The Manhood of the Master" and "The Meaning of Prayer," by Fosdick, as well as the books of the Every-day Life Series, are excellent short-term books, and very popular for men's classes. Women, also, will occasionally leave the beaten path to study some special course bearing upon questions of to-day. There are many excellent courses provided by the various denominational publishing houses, and a letter of inquiry will bring a generous supply of information.

The study of the life of Christ is always a popular course for both men and women, and this may be treated in a variety of ways. Sometimes one of the Gospels may be taken alone, or the four Gospels may be studied simultaneously, the class using a harmony in connection with their study; or, better still, each member may make his own harmony by purchasing two small New Testaments which are exactly alike, and pasting the parallel passages side by side in a loose-leaf notebook. This is an interesting study. On the

completion of the course each member will have his own harmony of the Gospels, which may contain unlimited personal references, notes, and so forth, gathered during the study in the class and at home.

Some classes take up special courses in which they use the Bible alone as a textbook. The teacher plans the course of study and makes assignments for the lesson text and for home reading. If the teacher is resourceful, this is an excellent plan, for it never fails to promote individual Bible-reading and a dependence upon the Bible itself for help. The success of this plan, however, depends largely upon the teacher, who must not only know the Bible thoroughly, but must have sufficient ingenuity and originality to plan the work and to present it in an interesting manner. A class of young women once spent a winter in studying the Old Testament in this manner. The teacher prepared a chart depicting the history of Israel from the time of Saul to the Captivity, showing the contemporary kings of Israel and Judah and the record of each. One of the members of the class said that nothing had ever helped her in getting the kings of Israel and Judah straightened out as did that chart, and the history of the Divided Kingdom was made plain to her for the first time.

Charts are always helpful and may be used with almost any lesson courses. Homemade charts are better than the finest that may be bought, and if each member of the class will make his own, the help derived will be great. A chart used in the class provides



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an object lesson that not only assists the memories of the students but speaks forcibly of the interest and effort of the teacher.

It is impossible to close this chapter without emphasizing the need of Bibles in the classroom. Get the members of the class to bring their own Bibles, if possible, but for those who do not, there should be Bibles available. If the International Lessons are used, the use of Lesson Leaf or Quarterly in the classroom should be discouraged. When the members of an adult class form the habit of bringing their own Bibles to Sunday school, for use in the study of the lesson, then a real Bible class exists, whose members will acquire a love for the Word which might never otherwise be gained.

## CHAPTER VII

### “It Pays to Advertise”

Every growing class advertises its goods. The Bible class that wishes to attract new people must resort to publicity. Some one has said that “advertising is the fine art of making folks want things,” and when a Bible class is advertised in such a way that people want to “belong,” the problem of successful Bible class advertising has been solved.

There are many ways to advertise a class and its work. A few of the mediums used may be:

The daily papers.

Printed cards or notices.

The billboard.

The electric sign.

The adult class emblem.

Word of mouth.

The purpose of all advertising is, first, to arouse interest; second, to create a desire; third, to induce action. Every advertisement, press notice, or invitation card should be written with these three points in mind. The final purpose of adult Bible class advertising is to induce eligible persons to enroll as members of the class and take part in its activities. To accomplish this, their interest in the class must be aroused

and a desire created that will be strong enough to cause them to join.

Of the several mediums suggested, more people can be reached through the daily newspapers than by any other means. This does not necessarily mean paid advertising. If a class is really doing things and doing them in an out-of-the-ordinary way, an enterprising city editor will always be glad to receive a write-up. This is far more valuable than a paid advertisement, although not so easily obtainable. A paid advertisement on the weekly church page of a newspaper is valuable, but it should be run regularly rather than at intervals. A small advertisement which appears regularly is more valuable than a large advertisement which appears only occasionally. It means that the class issues a standing invitation to men and women to come in and share the good things offered, and that the members are sufficiently solicitous concerning the welfare of outsiders to pay for the invitation.

Printed cards or notices placed in the hands of class members for distribution are good advertising mediums. The subject matter on the cards should be brief but clear and convincing. A weekly notice in the church calendar is good, and serves to keep the work of the class before the church.

One energetic class of young women had cards printed bearing a statement of their activities. Their idea was not only to gain new members but to enlighten the whole church in regard to their class work. These cards were placed in the pew racks on Sunday morning

and caused much favorable comment. They read as follows:

Do you know what the Philathea Class of Immanuel Sunday School is doing?

We are studying the Bible.

We maintain two prayer circles a week.

We maintain a teacher-training class, which meets every Wednesday evening before prayer meeting.

We have furnished ten permanent teachers to the Sunday school during the past year.

We supply substitute teachers nearly every Sunday.

We have organized an affiliated Philathea Class at the Florence Crittenden Home, which meets on Sunday afternoon and is taught by our class president.

We lead a devotional meeting at the Florence Crittenden Home once a month.

Our classroom is open every Friday evening, that the girls may meet for a social time.

We have pledged two hundred dollars toward the church debt this year.

We have presented the pastor with an automobile during the past year.

These are only a few of our activities. As a class we are endeavoring to stand by our platform: “Young women at work for young women, all standing by the Bible, the Bible school, and the church.”

The same class printed a schedule of a summer course, which their teacher based on a series of articles on “The Master Builder,” which had appeared in one of the periodicals. The topics ran as follows:

#### STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF THE MASTER

July 13—His Birth and Education.

“ 20—His Call to the Ministry and Desert Experience.

“ 27—His First Battle and His First Miracle.

Aug. 3—The Master as a Preacher.

“ 10—The Master as a Teacher.

“ 17—The Master as a Conversationalist.

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Aug. 24—The Master as a Physician.

“ 31—The Friends of the Master.

Sept. 7—The Master's Secret Companionship.

“ 14—The Master's Monument.

Any young woman who is not now identified with any department of Sunday-school work is cordially invited to join us. There is no cooler place than the Philathea classroom of our church on a summer morning. Come next Sunday and see for yourself. If not eligible, or if already a member, kindly hand this card to some young woman of your acquaintance who is not now attending Sunday school.

These schedule cards were mailed to young women in the community who were not attending any Sunday school and were also distributed by members of the class. The result was a larger attendance during the summer months than ever before, and many new members were secured.

The billboard is a medium of publicity not often used by adult Bible classes, but very effective, especially for men's classes. It is costly, and therefore is generally used only for the advertisement of some unusual event.

The electric sign in front of the church is also a rather expensive advertising medium, but one that is growing in popularity. The wording may be varied to suit the occasion, or it may bear simply the name of the class and a word of invitation. The adult Bible class emblem may be effectively used as an electric sign and speaks for itself. “Meet me at the sign of the bull's-eye” became the slogan of a men's class which used the electrically illuminated emblem to advertise the class.

Every adult Bible class should make liberal use of the class emblem. Members should wear it constantly,

remembering that it serves to advertise not only their class, but the whole adult Bible class movement as well, and serves to introduce adult Bible class members all over the world. The little buttons are so inexpensive (only one cent each) that no one need be without one, and a supply should be kept on hand constantly for distribution among class members.

One of the most effective means of advertising a class is to talk about it. “The essence of Christianity is sharing one’s best with others.” A member of a live Bible class should tell his friends about it, especially those who are not members of any class. Urge them to visit the class; see that they are kept supplied with literature and information, and do not get discouraged if they do not seem to respond. A man who is at the head of a large mail-order business said in describing their follow-up system:

“If a name once gets on our mailing list we never let go until we get a definite answer of some kind from the prospect. We have a follow-up system of twenty-eight letters, which are mailed at intervals of six weeks. Sometimes we land a customer on the third or fourth letter, often on the tenth or twelfth, and frequently not until the twenty-seventh or twenty-eighth—but we eventually land him in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred.”

If persistence such as this accomplishes its purpose in the commercial world, should we not use the same tactics in our efforts to extend the Kingdom? The successful salesman believes in his goods, believes that the

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other man wants his goods, and believes in his own ability to convince the other man that he wants his goods. These are the principles that should actuate every member of an adult Bible class, and every member should be a walking advertisement for the class. "We are advertised by our loving friends," is the slogan of a certain well-known firm. This should be true of the adult Bible class that is doing active work. Every member should feel under obligation to tell others about the class, although the definite publicity work should be in the hands of a Publicity Committee. Great care should be exercised in selecting the chairman of this committee. If the class is fortunate enough to have on its roll a man or woman connected with a newspaper, this problem is easily solved. If not, the chairman must be a "live wire," one who understands business principles and newspaper ethics, who is able to recognize real news and to write it up in an interesting manner. He should also possess initiative and resourcefulness and be always on the lookout for new and interesting methods of advertising the class.

William T. Ellis says: "The Church's problem and obligation is to tell her good news to everybody and to tell it in an interesting manner. He sins against virtue who makes religion uninteresting. Do the thing that meets the religious need of the times and get your message across."

In that last sentence is packed the reason for existence of the adult Bible class movement. It is doing the thing that meets the religious need of the times by

tying up men and women to Bible study and service. Every class should see to it that it gets the message to those outside through the wise use of various publicity methods.

Whatever methods are chosen, however, there are a few vital principles which should be closely adhered to. Bible class publicity should be:

1. For the sake of the Kingdom.
2. To magnify the work and not the workers.
3. Persistent, not spasmodic.
4. Truthful in every particular.
5. “Different” from the stereotyped church notice.
6. Coördinated with the Sunday school and church of which it is a part.



## CHAPTER VIII

### *Finances*

The finances of the adult Bible class are of sufficient importance to receive thoughtful attention and to be carefully administered. The budget plan, which is now almost universally adopted by churches and Sunday schools, should also be used for the Bible class.

The Executive Committee of the class, in conference with the Finance Committee, if there is one, may plan the budget, which should be approved by the class. If the expenses of the class are estimated at the beginning of the year and planned for intelligently, it is much easier to accomplish desired results. The budget should cover the necessary working expenses of the class, such as postage, printing, and so forth, as well as the expenses of the social department. It should also cover the welfare work or benevolences of the class, as well as the activities of the Missionary Committee, and a contingent fund should be provided for, to be used in case of emergency.

When the budget is made up and approved the next question is, "How shall the money be raised?" Fortunately, indeed, is the class that is able to carry on its activities and pay its bills without being obliged to resort to suppers and bazaars to raise funds, although

many women's classes find these means most successful. One great objection to the bazaar or supper which is given for the purpose of making money is that usually the burden falls upon a devoted few. Often, too, not only members of the class but also many outsiders are asked to donate articles, as well as to buy tickets. This always brings reproach and criticism from some who are not in sympathy with such methods. It is far better to conduct the Lord's work on a businesslike and square-dealing basis. If a supper or bazaar is to be given, supplies should be purchased and such prices charged as will insure a reasonable, but not exorbitant, profit. There are many ways in which a class can make money and at the same time give value received.

Money to carry on the regular activities of the class should come from the class itself. There are a number of methods by which this may be accomplished. The offering taken in the class on Sunday should go into the Sunday-school treasury unless some other arrangement is approved by the Sunday-school superintendent or board. Some classes, with the full knowledge and consent of the superintendent, retain a certain percentage of the offering for the class funds, and often this results more satisfactorily than when two offerings are taken, one for the school and one for the class, for some class members will give to the class fund rather than to the Sunday school. I once heard of a young men's class that did not turn enough money into the Sunday-school treasury to pay for the supplies used in their class, although there was always more than

enough in the class treasury to take care of class activities. This is not fair to the school, for every adult class should at least pay its way in the Sunday school of which it is a part.

Some classes charge dues of from ten to twenty-five cents per month. This money is used for running expenses, social activities, and so forth, and a certain proportion is turned over to the Missionary Committee, unless a separate fund is maintained for this purpose. Some missionary committees take care of their work through voluntary contributions, which are deposited in a box kept in the classroom. One class provides its members with envelopes for their Sunday offerings, which are divided equally between the school and missions, while the loose money which is placed on the plate is kept as a "contingent fund," to be used when needed by the class for any department of class work.

If a class is responsible for some special work, such as supporting a Bible teacher in foreign lands, or assisting in the support of a parish abroad, the distribution of mite boxes among the members is a good thing. If a special Easter or Christmas offering is to be taken, it is a good plan to distribute mite boxes among the members of the class three or six months in advance. Many stray pennies and nickels will find their way into these boxes, and in this way the offering of the class will be materially increased when the special day arrives. One school which lays great emphasis on missionary giving, and which takes one great missionary offering

each year, often amounting to fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars, secures its money by laying aside each Sunday one half of the class offerings in the Intermediate, Senior, and Adult classes for missionary purposes. The treasurer of each class keeps this amount in the class treasury until the missionary day arrives, when the money is turned over with any additions that the members may desire to make at that time. One class of young women, nearly all of whom were wage earners, made a freewill offering of one hundred and sixty dollars. Most of this was laid aside during the year in small amounts. Another class called themselves the "Do Without Band," and raised their missionary money by denying themselves occasional luxuries. This class supported a missionary in China entirely through self-denial offerings.

Giving is the ideal way to finance the Lord's work, but few organizations are able to depend entirely upon freewill offerings. In devising plans to earn money, a class should endeavor to select those that will engage the whole class in action. A "dollar social" is always interesting and usually successful. Each member of the class is told that a dollar must be earned in some unusual way and a date is named for a class social when the money is to be turned in and when each member must tell in verse how the dollar was earned. A great deal of fun is always experienced at the social, for many are the methods practiced in earning the dollars, and the reading of the verses excites great merriment. The following verses were read at an event of this sort by

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a young woman who brought twice the amount specified:

"Just a few days before Christmas, when all through the house  
There was litter and clatter and not even a mouse  
Could have peace and quiet and live at his ease,  
I earned two whole dollars by selling green wreaths.

"My friends were quite liberal and bought them of me,  
Instead of patronizing the florist, you see,  
For they all knew that my dollar had to be earned,  
And a neat little sum in this manner I turned."

A variation of this method is to give each member of the class a sum of money, usually five or ten cents, with instructions to invest it in some way and turn in the proceeds on a certain date. Very startling results are often secured by judicious investment.

One active class of young women decided that their pastor needed an automobile and that they would give it to him. How to raise the money was the great question which confronted them. The president and the teacher conferred, with the result that they compiled an attractive calendar with a quotation for every day in the year. These calendars were bound in the class colors, blue and white, and bore the class motto, "We Do Things." Each one was placed in a specially made holly box for the Christmas trade. They sold for fifty cents each and as every girl in the class was a sales agent, nearly two thousand calendars were sold in less than two months. Some firms bought them in quantities for Christmas distribution among their employees. On Christmas morning the pastor received a check

sufficiently large to cover the cost of the latest Ford model, entirely secured from the sale of the calendars. The same class later published a cookbook, from which they derived a fair profit.

Men's classes seldom resort to schemes for money-making, but women often find it necessary to seek money-making devices. There are many other methods than those named by which women's classes have succeeded in raising large amounts of money. Baked-goods sales and candy sales are always popular and usually bring large returns. Some classes sell aluminum ware and special groceries, on which they are allowed a commission. It is always a good plan to have a Finance Committee, either in a men's or a women's class, who will give time and thought to the finances of the class. Any plans that are made should be in harmony with the policy of the church and the school, and care should be taken to see that there is no conflict with any other organization of the church.

One word of warning in closing this chapter may not be amiss. The class funds should be cared for in a businesslike way. A treasurer should be chosen who understands bookkeeping. A commercial account should be carried in a bank, if the class funds justify it, and everything should be paid by check. The treasurer should give a report at every monthly business meeting. Too much care cannot be exercised in this respect. The funds of the class should be regarded as a sacred trust and the best methods should be employed to care for them.

## CHAPTER IX

### **The Class Teacher**

The teacher of an adult Bible class faces great responsibility and enjoys rare privileges. Jesus exalted the mission of teacher when for three years he taught a class composed of twelve men chosen from different walks of life, men who were for the most part uneducated and untrained. This class may not have been organized as we interpret the term to-day, but it had a class treasurer and the three forms of service represented by the Social, Membership, and Missionary committees were certainly practiced by its members. Andrew and Philip were a self-constituted Membership Committee. The entire group met frequently for social times, and surely no other class ever offered so large a percentage of its membership as missionaries. The effective work done by this group was the direct result of their association with the class Teacher. "Thou art a teacher come from God," was the tribute of Nicodemus. Should not this be true of every Sunday-school teacher?

W. C. Pearce says that the task of the Sunday-school teacher is one that angels would fly to perform, and yet we hear continually the plaintive wail of Sunday-school superintendents: "It is so difficult to get teachers."

Is this because many of our church members are afraid to face the responsibility involved?

What are the essential qualifications of the successful adult Bible class teacher? Let us enumerate a few of them:

1. A clean life, consecrated to the will of God and willing at all times to follow his guidance.

2. A clear mind, capable of fair and unbiased judgment, and able to decide perplexing questions quickly and impartially.

3. A strong will that knows no defeat or discouragement, and does not waver or flinch in the face of difficult tasks.

4. A keen vision, that enables the teacher to see not only the possibilities that lie within the grasp of the class as a whole, but also the possibilities that lie within the grasp of each individual member.

5. A sympathetic belief in humanity that sees good in the most unattractive class member, and an abiding belief in the Creator that enables him to believe that the divine spark dwells within every man and needs only the point of contact with the living Fire to burst into flame.

6. A knowledge of and love for God's Word that make the teaching of it a delight.

7. A tender, loving heart, that enables him to enter the everyday life of the class member, to see his trials and discouragements, and to bring to him the help and strength needed for the daily task.

As the teacher is, so will the class be. A strong



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president has been known to save a class when the teacher was weak, but the place of the class in the school, the church, or the community, is usually determined by the teacher. The teacher, therefore, should be one in whom the spirit of service is strongly manifest, one who thinks not of himself but of others, and one whose personality is so strong and winning that men and women are inevitably attracted by the spell of his magnetism.

Some one has said, "Teachers are born, not made." This is not altogether true. Some teachers are born, and others, very successful ones, have been made, but they have paid the price. In these days of teacher-training classes, community training schools, schools of methods, summer conferences, and good books, there is no excuse for the existence of the untrained Bible class teacher. An earnest teacher should be always on the alert to avail himself of every possible opportunity to improve himself and his teaching. To be successful he must not only be willing to spend hours each week in the preparation of the lesson but he must know the principles of teaching as well. He must know the members of his class and how to apply the lesson to their particular needs. He must realize that the all-important factor in teaching is not the ideas in the teacher's mind but the ideas that exist in the student's mind, and he must know how to correlate these with what he has to teach. He must devote hours each week to the class, both collectively and individually. He must give time to the members of the class, and should never

be too busy to see them when they call, or to visit them when a call is needed. He should know the home life and environment of each class member, if possible, his principal characteristics, his likes and dislikes, and his special gift or talent, if any exists. Only as he knows the members of the class can he do the best work with them. Some one may say that this is impossible in a large class, but it can be done. A men's class of several hundred members maintains a card file. Each man is listed with proper address, and as much information is recorded as the secretary or the Membership Committee have been able to secure. Even his hobby or fad is recorded. The teacher studies these cards as well as the men. One day the Sunday-school superintendent came to him and said: "We want a teacher from your class for a class of boys about fourteen. Give me a good, live man that can keep them busy, for they are terrors." The teacher turned to the card file and found there a man whose hobby was aëroplanes and mechanics. He suggested that this man be asked to take the class. The man consented and was a success from the beginning. He would invite the boys to spend their Saturday afternoons in his experimental shop, and soon they were building aëroplanes. He did not find it difficult to hold their attention on Sunday mornings when he gave them so much of his time on Saturday afternoons. This incident shows the value of knowing something about the members of an adult class, for through his knowledge of this man's specialty the teacher was able to supply him with an opportunity

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for service and to provide a class of boys with an earnest, capable teacher.

The teacher must not commit the fatal error of trying to do all the work of the class. The important factor in the class is not the teacher but the class member. The class exists for the purpose of developing and training workers, and the wise teacher will depend upon the officers and committees for the successful conduct of the class activities and will let them feel that he is depending upon them. His chief business is teaching, not attending to details of the class. He must also be a friend in the truest sense of the word to all the members of the class. He must be a good mixer, one who can at all times show himself friendly, and he must be equally friendly with all members of the class. He must be practical and able not only to give good advice but to assist the members of the class by putting them in a position to help themselves if they are in need. A teacher who can find employment for the members of his class, or assist them in choosing their vocation, is doing practical Christian work. He must be resourceful and ingenious, always ready to listen to a tale of woe or of gladness, as the case may be, and never too busy to stop and go apart with a class member for prayer or conference. He must be able to see things from the standpoint of the class and must at all times be sympathetic with the plans and ideas of class members. If unwise plans are proposed, the teacher should be able to dissuade the class from undertaking them, but this should be done diplomatically and not arbitrarily.

Of course, the teacher must be punctual and faithful in attendance on class sessions. This goes without saying. The teacher should always be first in the classroom, and ready to greet each member on entrance. He should be the last to leave, always ready to linger for the whispered word of confidence or greeting from some member of the class who has had trouble or joy during the week. The teacher should be one of the class always, but the outstanding one. He should mingle with the members in all class activities, but he should at the same time be the real leader to whom the class will look for spiritual and temporal advice and help.

Does this sound as if a great deal is required? Yes; but to a teacher a great deal is given. The price is high, but the results are worth the cost.

## CHAPTER X

### **The Teacher's Preparation of the Lesson**

A teacher of an adult Bible class once said, "I always reserve Saturday evening for the study of my Sunday-school lesson." This is a good rule, so far as it goes, but it does not go quite far enough, if Saturday evening is the only time given to the preparation of the lesson.

The successful teacher will begin the specific preparation of the lesson at least the Sunday previous to the Sunday on which the lesson will be presented. He should have, however, not only a definite knowledge of the lesson at least two Sundays in advance, but he should have a clear, general knowledge of the course as a whole, for then only can he relate the lessons to each other and to the whole course. He should be sufficiently familiar with the lesson for the following Sunday to make assignments for class research, and to ask questions or make statements that will arouse interest on the part of the class in what is to come. There are certain broad, unchanging principles that the successful teacher will always keep in mind.

1. There must be time for preparation. Some teachers will say, "I haven't time to study my lesson as I should." Usually it is not a case of having time,

but of taking time. We all have twenty-four hours in each day. It is a question of how we are going to invest the time that we have. Sometimes we take time, but do not make the most of our time. The successful preparation of the lesson depends upon the wise use of the time at the teacher's disposal. There must always be concentration and freedom from interruption.

2. The lesson should be studied from the viewpoint of the class, not always from the viewpoint of the teacher. We have said before that the important factor is not the ideas in the teacher's head, but the ideas that exist in the minds of the class members. The teacher who knows his class will study to present the lesson in such a way that it will be understood by them and will appeal to them.

3. The teacher must have an appetite for illustrative material and be always on the lookout for it. He must be sure, however, that his illustrations are not chosen merely for the sake of the story, but that they really illustrate his point. The purpose of illustration, some one has wisely said, is not to construct ornamentation, but to ornament construction. An illustration must emphasize the point the teacher is making, not detract from it.

4. There must be a broad, general knowledge of the Book. The teacher of an adult Bible class should know the history of the Bible and how it came to be. He should know why the different books were written, and by whom. He should be able to interpret them

according to their times, as well as teach them in the language of to-day, applying the great, unchanging truths to the daily lives of the class members.

5. If the teacher is to prepare the lesson satisfactorily, he must have good tools with which to work. Every Bible teacher should own, at least, the American Standard Revised Version of the Bible, a good concordance, and a Bible dictionary. In addition he should have just as many reference books and helps as he can afford. Believing that the Bible is its own best commentary, I would urge the purchase of several editions of the Bible if possible, including the Twentieth Century New Testament. These are very helpful, if read comparatively, although the American Standard Revision is recommended for regular use.

In preparing to teach a lesson the teacher must first of all master the lesson material. He must find out for himself what the Bible writers really meant to say and to whom they said it. The Bible should be read in the same natural fashion in which any other book is read, and the teacher should ascertain whether the lesson is a bit of history, a letter, or a poem, remembering that the poets of the Bible have the same poetic license that other poets have. If the lesson is historical, look at it from the historical standpoint and study the situation that the writer himself faced when he wrote that particular passage. There are two things necessary in order to get the historical background: knowledge of the facts and a live, sympathetic, consecrated imagination.

The teacher should give the lesson a careful first

reading, also reading the connecting text between it and the lesson previous. The second reading should be still more careful, paying particular attention to unusual words used, or customs mentioned, consulting the concordance or dictionary for their meaning. A third reading may be given to securing the geographical setting, locating places mentioned, ascertaining distances traversed, and so forth. A fourth reading may be devoted to the biographical or historical element, looking up references bearing on the characters or events mentioned. By this time the lesson text will be fairly well placed in the teacher's mind, and if only one reading is accomplished each day, the week will now be well advanced. The rest of the time may be used in real, intensive study, in seeking to find in the lesson truths applicable to the class, in deciding on the central thought on which to dwell, and in planning the presentation of the lesson as a whole. The teacher should be constantly on the alert for illustrative material, and when everyday illustrations are brought to the class from the teacher's own observation or experience, they are much more effective.

The successful teacher will sometimes be able to tell a good story to the class. We all enjoy a story, and nowhere can such a wealth of story material be found as in the Bible. The teacher need not confine himself, however, to Bible material. A story from real life, or from some of the current magazines, or a good missionary story, all may be worked in from time to time to give variation and change. There may be occasions



when the teacher may very wisely occupy the entire lesson period by telling the class a story that has a direct bearing on the lesson, or illustrates the central truth which the teacher is endeavoring to impart.

The teacher should have a definite plan of presentation in mind when preparing the lesson, and should study with that plan in the background. There are four elements in a lesson: the approach, the development, the teaching point, the close.

The teacher should never be in doubt as to how he is going to begin the lesson. His opening sentence should be planned and ready when the time comes. He should know just how he is going to develop the lesson until he emphasizes the central truth or teaching point, and he should know how he is going to close—and when.

Only when these points are well defined in a teacher's mind is his lesson properly prepared.

In addition to the mental preparation that is given to the lesson, there is the most important element of all, and that is the teacher's personal preparation. The really successful Bible class teacher is the one who waits before God, and who seeks earnestly the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the preparation of the lesson. Mere good intention or mere consecration will not achieve the well-prepared lesson, but with hard study the Holy Spirit will guide into all truth. Study, therefore, to show thyself approved, "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." And remember always that the life speaks louder than the words.

## CHAPTER XI

### Teaching the Lesson

In an adult Bible class conference the author once heard the question asked of the leader, "If you were the teacher of an adult Bible class and sometimes twelve members were present for the class session, sometimes ten, but oftener only six or seven, and sometimes even fewer than that, in a class of fifteen members, what would you do?" The leader responded promptly: "I would sit up nights, studying some unusual and original way of beginning the lesson. That is one thing I would do. I would not begin by saying, 'What is our lesson about to-day?' Or, 'Can you tell me the golden text?' Neither would I have the class read the lesson verse by verse and then answer the questions contained in the Quarterly. No one can keep the interest of an adult Bible class by using such methods." After the conference a young woman approached the leader and said: "It was our teacher that asked you that question about the attendance, and my, but you stepped on her toes, for she always begins the lesson just the way you said, and she asks all the questions from the Quarterly. I hope you opened her eyes."

How many teachers dignify that method of conducting a Bible class by the term teaching? Anybody can

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ask questions from a Quarterly, but it takes more effort than that to make a profitable lesson period for either adults or children. They must get something worth while, and teaching any Sunday-school class calls for originality, study, ingenuity, and consecration.

As stated in the previous chapter, the teacher should have a definite plan for each lesson, and unless there is a good reason for changing should adhere closely to the plan.

The efficient adult Bible class teacher will vary the methods of teaching. He will remember always that he is dealing with adults, not children, with mature men and women whose opinions are already formed, and his teaching should be such as to arouse interest and promote thought.

There are several methods of teaching an adult class, which we may consider briefly.

1. There is the recitation method, which means that the class hour is used to hear the students recite what has been previously assigned to them for study. This method, when used successfully, implies that the teacher makes the assignments so definite and attractive that the class members really study the lesson. If special assignments for study or research are given, a teacher should never fail to call for them on the following Sunday. The more perfectly a teacher succeeds in getting his class to study, the more necessary will it be for the teacher himself to make a definite and worth-while contribution to the lesson period, for if this is not done by the teacher, he will fall in the estimation of the mem-

bers of the class, for they will soon detect that they are better posted than their teacher.

2. The lecture method is generally used in large classes, though not necessarily. This method economizes in time, but does not usually provoke thought or discussion in the class. It appeals to busy men and women, who say that they have not time to study the lesson, but it seldom develops Bible students. Instead, it often encourages inertia of thought, the class apparently remaining content to let the teacher think for them.

3. The discussion method is the live method and really the best of all. Ideas must already exist in the minds of the class members if a live discussion is to be a feature of the class period. This method has its dangers, however, which the skillful teacher must learn to avoid. There is the danger of wandering far from the subject, especially if the class possesses among its members one with a hobby, who is always trying to draw in his pet subject. The teacher must exercise wisdom and tact in handling a discussion and must be able not only to keep it within bounds but also to draw out the timid members, and to avoid letting the talkative members monopolize all of the time.

4. The coöperative method combines the recitation and discussion methods, being neither mere recitation nor mere discussion. The first essential of this method is that the teacher shall be able each Sunday to give definite assignments for the following week. Five or ten minutes of the class period may be occupied in this

manner. If wisely done, this arouses interest in what is to come, on the part of the class, and provides an incentive to study.

5. The research method is the coöperative method carried to the highest degree of mental attainment. This method can be used successfully only when the class is composed of real students, who will put time and effort on the lesson. When this method is used, the teacher gives in advance assignments and questions that will require both effort and time on the part of the students.

The efficient teacher will study the members of the class and use the method or methods that will best fit their needs and mental attainments. He will adapt his methods of teaching to the lesson material, the class, and the occasion. He will sometimes use some very different method of approach, or will tell some startling incident by way of illustration. He will occasionally tell a good story, perhaps giving up the lesson material entirely for that day, but he will not do this without good reason. He will study the art of questioning, for this is a real art, and one that too few teachers have mastered. Questions should always provoke thought on the part of the class. They should never be so worded as to suggest the answer, or so constructed that they may be answered by "Yes" or "No." Questioning should be designed by the teacher to bring out the best in the class, to call forth different views of the subject that is being considered, and to cause the class members to think. It is sometimes difficult to get a

class to answer questions, especially if they have been accustomed to the lecture method of teaching, but with patience and perseverance it can be done. It is usually better to make the questions general, especially at first, rather than to single out any individual, unless a special assignment has been made, or unless the teacher feels reasonably sure that the one called on will not be painfully embarrassed.

The teacher should never lose sight of the real teaching point, or central thought, of the lesson; that is, he should decide on at least one point to make during the lesson period, and he should make that point. The teaching point should be wisely chosen and should be a vital truth, not a technicality. This brings to mind an adult class which the author once visited. The lesson was taken from the first chapter of The Acts and the teacher spent the entire lesson period on the verse reading: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." The time was spent in discussing the manner of Christ's coming again, a topic on which all seemed to differ, and nothing at all was said about the Great Commission of the eighth verse, which should have vitally concerned everyone in the class.

Special thought and preparation should be given to the close of the lesson. Occasionally it may seem wise to make a direct evangelistic appeal, especially if there are some in the class who are not professing Christians.

I do not believe that it is wise, under ordinary circumstances, to do this every Sunday. "Familiarity breeds contempt," and the appeal will be more forceful if it comes as the result of some special lesson or occurrence, rather than as a matter of course. Whatever form the close of the lesson may take, however, it should be of such a nature that the class will leave the room with a definite and helpful impression.

It may be well at this time to emphasize the need of a separate classroom for adult classes and an uninterrupted lesson period. No one should be permitted to enter the classroom after the lesson has begun. The organization of the school and class should be such that announcements, secretary's records, and so forth, are taken care of without any interruption of the lesson, for a lesson period may be ruined by injudicious interruption. The teacher of a young women's class was once just at the climax of the lesson, which she had most carefully and prayerfully prepared, with the determination to make an appeal to some of the members of the class to take a definite stand for Christ on that day. It was a solemn moment; the room was hushed, and the atmosphere tense. The teacher felt that the time was most propitious to urge the claim of Christ upon the lives of those young women, when, without warning of any kind, the door of the classroom opened and a woman with a high-pitched voice asked, "How many cakes will this class furnish for our supper next week?" Can we blame the teacher, who turned to face the intruder and answered quickly, "None!" She

went home from Sunday school that day to weep bitterly over the failure, which was not hers but that of the school management, for in a well-ordered school such a tragedy could not occur. The teacher has a right to demand an uninterrupted lesson period.

Whatever the conclusion of the lesson may be, it should be definite and practical. Indirect suggestion is often more potent than direct. It is seldom necessary to point out the moral, either to adults or to children. They prefer to be allowed to draw their own conclusions, and are abundantly capable of doing so. This is evidenced by the story of the small boy who told his mother that he liked his new Sunday-school teacher much better than the old one, because the new one hadn't any morals. Jesus often used parables that he did not explain because their meaning was obvious. So a wise teacher may close the lesson with a story or illustration that will sink into the hearts of the listeners and remain with them. Consecrated common sense and everyday tact will enable the adult Bible class teacher to decide. Jesus in his teaching made use of both suggestion and illustration, and we cannot do better than to study his methods of lesson presentation.



## CHAPTER XII

### **The Class and the Sunday School**

"What is the relationship of the adult Bible class to the Sunday school?" is a question often asked by Sunday-school superintendents and officers, as well as by adult Bible class members. There have been many instances of real trouble occasioned by a lack of understanding on the part of Sunday-school and Bible class officials.

The organized adult Bible class is of necessity a part of the Sunday school, and not apart from it. The Sunday school is larger than the organized class. It is the trunk of the tree, while the class is only one of the branches. The adult class, therefore, should never lose sight of the welfare and harmony of the school as a whole.

Nevertheless, the adult class often fails at just this point. If the class is large, the natural tendency is to draw away from the school. The members often want more time for the lesson and do not care to participate in the opening or closing exercises. They sometimes demand entire independence in the selection of lesson courses. Social activities and entertainments are frequently planned without regard to other meetings that may be scheduled in which all the members of the

school should be interested. The Sunday-school superintendent is sometimes criticized if he calls on the adult class for teachers or helpers in the school. In fact, there are great possibilities for trouble between the adult Bible class and the Sunday school unless wise leadership prevails on both sides.

The adult Bible class must not lose sight of the fact that it is an integral part of the Sunday school. The second point in the Standard of organization of the International Sunday School Association specifies that the class shall be definitely connected with some Sunday school. To the Sunday school the organized adult Bible class owes its being, and the class that remains loyal to the best interests of the school will have a great opportunity for service.

This does not mean, however, that the adult class is on exactly the same plane as the other departments of the school. The Sunday-school superintendent should recognize the adult class as a coöperating agency, and should see to it that every adult class in the school is represented in his cabinet or Executive Committee. The class teacher, or the president, or both, may be asked to serve in this capacity, and in this way the class will be able to keep in touch with the interests of the entire school, and the danger of conflict will be greatly lessened. The class will thus know what is needed by the school and will be confronted by some of the superintendent's problems. This will usually result in a desire to help. If the superintendent is wise, he will cause the members of the class to feel that he is depend-

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ing on them for "first aid." This inspires their loyalty and a desire to serve.

There should be the fullest coöperation between the adult class teacher and the Sunday-school superintendent. This means that absolute fairness and justice must be exercised by both. No matter what differences of opinion may exist, it is very unwise for the teacher of the class to have any argument with the superintendent in the presence of the class. The superintendent is the commanding officer of the school and the teachers are his subordinates. If the class teacher takes issue with the superintendent regarding any matter affecting the class, he should talk to him privately about it. The teacher of a young women's class which was noted for its school loyalty was once heard to say: "If the Sunday-school superintendent should come into our classroom during the lesson period and ask that we vacate immediately in the interests of the boy scouts, who wanted to hold a meeting in the room, I should lead the class out without a murmur, rather than argue the matter with the superintendent in their presence. However, I should certainly reserve the right to tell him in private what I thought of such a procedure." While this may be a somewhat exaggerated statement, it illustrates the point that there must be full coöperation and harmony between teacher and superintendent, for the attitude of the adult class toward the school is largely determined by that of the teacher. If the teacher is disposed to think of class interests only, trouble is sure to result. A teacher

whose sole aim appears to be the building up of the class and increasing its membership lacks the real Sunday-school vision. One of his greatest joys should be in providing workers from his class for the Sunday school, either as teachers and officers or as students in the teacher-training class.

A Sunday-school superintendent who was preparing to organize a teacher-training class, approached the teacher of an adult class and asked if he might select three of the brightest members for the teacher-training class. The teacher drew himself up haughtily and said, "Sir, I want you to keep your hands off of my class." This man had not the slightest conception of the place that the adult Bible class should occupy in the Sunday school. The adult class should be the natural recruiting agency for workers in the Sunday school. The superintendent has a perfect right to look to it for helpers and should not be disappointed.

Members of the adult class who go out to serve in the school need not and should not be dropped from the class roll, but, as stated in a previous chapter, should be retained as honorary members, with the privilege of attending all class functions. A class that does not furnish workers is simply maintaining a body of "spiritual sponges," who come every Sunday to absorb all they can get, but who never give out anything.

The adult Bible class should usually participate, to some extent at least, in the general exercises of the school, if only for the sake of the example. The sight of a large men's class in the Sunday school will do much

to hold the teen-age boys. The adult class should not, however, be asked to attend both opening and closing exercises, as they are entitled to more than the thirty-minute period usually allotted to lesson study. The superintendent should make it a point to keep the opening exercises strictly within bounds, and many superintendents do not ask the adult classes to remain for the entire period, but provide a place on the program for them to retire to their classrooms if they so desire. The adult class should have at least forty or forty-five minutes for the study of the lesson, and the superintendent should be careful to see that they get it. In small schools, where there is but one room for the Intermediate, Senior, and Adult departments, this is not always easy to arrange, but curtains or movable partitions may be provided with very little expense, thus insuring some degree of privacy and enabling the class to enjoy a somewhat longer lesson period than the younger members of the school.

A men's class that has completely outgrown the little church that houses the Sunday school meets in a grocery across the street, but on certain occasions this class appears before the whole school; it is always in evidence when any special school feature is planned; and it is the first to respond with volunteers when a call for help arises in the Sunday school.

The adult classes should feel a special responsibility toward the teen-age department of the school. These young people will be the members of the adult classes of to-morrow, and every effort should be made by the class

of to-day to save them for the Sunday school and church. With this in mind the adult class may occasionally provide a special entertainment or social for the young people, or if any special equipment is needed for this department, the adult Bible classes may provide it. The adult classes should be interested in any department of the school, but most of all in this most interesting and difficult teen age, when so many boys and girls go out of the Sunday school forever, just because the Sunday school fails to provide them with all that their physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs require. The Sunday school should provide for each phase of boy and girl life, and the adult Bible class more than any other agency in the school can help in this.

The adult class is entitled to much consideration on the part of the Sunday-school superintendent. He should not be arbitrary in his dealings with them, but should accede to any reasonable request which they may make. He should allow them the greatest latitude possible in planning class activities or lesson courses, and should recognize them as the strong right arm of the Sunday school. The class should be given occasional honorable mention in the presence of the school when any special service has been tendered, and the class members should be made to feel always that they have a very vital part in the life of the school. When this is done, there will be little difference between class and school, but all will work together in perfect harmony to extend the Kingdom and to render the fullest possible service to the Master.

## CHAPTER XIII

### **The Class and the Church**

Like the Master whom it serves, the adult Bible class "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Its chief concern should be not what it can get from the Sunday school and church, but what it can give. Its opportunities for serving the church are as great as those for serving the Sunday school. Especially is this true of men's classes. The pastor is usually quick to recognize the possibilities of service within the adult class, and the classes should be as quick to respond to the call.

There should be a real feeling of partnership between the organized class and the church. The organized class is, or should be, one of the largest feeders of the church, and the pastor should realize this. The church is sure to owe a large debt to the active, working organized class, and cannot afford to ignore it. On the other hand, the class owes much to the church, which provides not only for its spiritual needs, but for the material needs as well. Adult classes are sometimes prone to take for granted the church building and equipment, the light and heat provided for their meetings, and many other things which are furnished so naturally that they have almost forgotten that they are

costly and that some one has to pay. The church provides not only a base of supplies but also a company with which to work, a congregation from which to recruit. The fullest coöperation, therefore, should exist between church and class if the best results are to be accomplished.

One of the best things an adult class can do for the church is to promote and practice church attendance. A large men's class attending in a body the evening service, or the weekly prayer meeting, will put new life into both service and pastor. The wise pastor will occasionally throw the responsibility of a service upon the men's class. Some ministers set aside one Sunday evening each month for this purpose, with good results. The men enjoy the responsibility and will take a natural pride in working up the attendance.

The midweek prayer service is usually one of the pastor's deepest problems. In these services the adult Bible classes can help out wonderfully by their presence and testimonies.

A men's class can also help greatly in the financial work of the church. Its members should support the various benevolent enterprises of the church, as well as contribute largely toward the regular budget. The members of a men's class should be the first to volunteer for service in the Every Member Canvass, or in any other activity of the church which needs their aid.

Regular church attendance should always be observed by the members of the adult class. In a certain church the young men's class and the young women's class



always attended the morning service in a body, occupying front seats on the left and on the right of the church. Their presence had its effect, not only on the congregation but also on the pastor, who was heard to say that his greatest inspiration in the morning service was in the attendance of these young people.

The greatest assistance that the adult Bible class can render the church, however, is in the winning of members to Jesus Christ and to membership in the Church. This can sometimes be done at the church service, but oftener and more effectively through the personal contact furnished by the class. There is no greater opportunity for soul-winning than in the adult Bible class. The organized class and personal evangelism should go hand in hand. The friendships formed in the adult Bible class should be used as an introduction to the greatest of all friendships—that of Jesus Christ. To accomplish this no effort is too arduous, no sacrifice too great.

Indefinite religious teaching or methods should have no place in the adult Bible class. It should stand uncompromisingly for Christ for all of life and for every life, and for the organization which Christ founded, the Christian Church. No other organized body within the Church can do so much to bring Christ into every life as can the adult Bible class working through church and Sunday school.

## CHAPTER XIV

### **The Class and the Community**

The work of the organized adult Bible class can no longer be bounded by the walls of the Sunday school or church. It is a community force and a force worthy to be reckoned with.

This is shown by the records of work accomplished by some of the adult classes in our large cities. In many communities the men's classes have promoted all sorts of social activities in order to provide a place other than the saloon where the lonely and homeless can gather in the evening. Many a saloon and pool room have been put out of business by an active men's class, which has provided a reading room and social meeting place for the men of the neighborhood.

Through the adult Bible class federations, which are being formed in many localities, the adult Bible class has become a force that the politicians are recognizing as worthy of notice. Some clever bosses are already scheming to control this new force which seems to have sprung up in a night and which is growing so rapidly.

The Adult Bible Class Federation is a movement designed, according to its constitution, "to unite all the Bible classes of a community in an effort to improve and extend adult Bible class work; to develop a bond of

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fellowship and a spirit of mutual helpfulness among all Bible class workers, to coöperate in large service, and to present a solid front in great evangelistic, missionary, temperance, and civic righteousness campaigns." A federation may be either of city or of state, but whichever it is, it presents united opposition on the part of Christian workers to all forces of evil within its territory. It unites all the organized adult Bible classes of the community in action against the common foe, and as the army is stronger than the regiment, so the organized adult Bible class federation is stronger than the class. In some cities the organization is so perfect that, through district officers and their committees, thousands of men and women can be reached with a personal message in less than twenty-four hours. The following constitution for a federation is suggestive:

### 1. NAME

This organization shall be known as the Organized Adult Bible Class Federation of . . . . ., organized in two divisions, one for men and one for women. It shall be auxiliary to the County Sunday School Association.

### 2. OBJECT

To federate all of the organized adult Bible classes of . . . . . in an effort to improve and extend adult Bible class work; to develop a bond of fellowship and a spirit of mutual helpfulness among all Bible class workers, to coöperate in large service, and to present a solid front in great evangelistic, missionary, temperance, and civic righteousness campaigns.

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3. MOTTO (TO BE CHOSEN)

4. MEMBERSHIP

Any adult Bible class organized according to the International Standard and having received an International Certificate of Recognition is regarded as a member of this Federation and is entitled to representation in all conferences and to share in all privileges of the Federation. The Men's Division will include men's classes and the men of mixed classes, and the Women's Division will include women's classes and the women of mixed classes. Sunday-school superintendents and pastors are *ex officio* members.

5. OFFICERS

The officers of this Federation shall be elected annually and shall consist of a president, vice president, and secretary of each division, and an Executive Committee in which shall be vested the direction of the affairs of the Federation. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of each division and seven other members, three of whom shall be the president, general secretary, and treasurer of the County Sunday School Association, not more than one of whom shall be from any one Bible class and not more than three of whom shall be of the same denomination. The president and secretary of each division of the Federation, when chosen, shall become *ex-officio* members of the Executive Committee of the County Sunday School Association, and the adult division superintendent of the County Sunday School Association shall be *ex officio* chairman of the Executive Committee of the Federation. The general secretary and treasurer of the County Sunday School Association shall be the general secretary and treasurer of both divisions.

## 6. MEETINGS

A general meeting of the Federation shall be held annually, at which time reports shall be read and officers elected. Each Bible class in the Federation shall be entitled to two delegates, and each class with an enrollment of over twenty-five shall be entitled to one extra delegate for every twenty-five additional members, or fraction thereof.

Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee at any time the needs of the work may demand.

## 7. AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular called meeting of the Federation by a two thirds vote of the members present, provided that one month's notice of such intention has been given to each class within the Federation.

In the dry campaign waged so victoriously in Michigan in 1916 the men's Bible classes played a very conspicuous part. Never in the history of Detroit did so many Christian business men volunteer for service at the polls, and for months before election day a systematically organized force was at work throughout the city, combing each ward and precinct, distributing circulars and information. This force was largely made up of men from the organized Bible classes. In other cities equally efficient "dry" campaign work has been carried on through the men's classes.

The adult class is vitally concerned in winning the unchurched men and women of the community to its membership. The adult class, with an active Mem-

bership Committee is the point of contact between "outsiders" and the church. Adults can be more easily won for the church through the organized adult Bible class than by any other method. One of the first duties of the organized class, therefore, is to reach the unchurched members of the community.

A men's class which calls itself a "Community Bible Class" has made a house-to-house canvass of the entire community within a radius of one mile of the church, and has located every man who is not affiliated with any church or attending any Sunday school. A large map of the neighborhood has been drawn and hung in the classroom, and every man's location is marked and numbered. On the margin is written the name of each prospect. Every member of the class is given one or more of these names and is held responsible for the delivery of the man to the class, or a satisfactory reason for his nondelivery. Needless to say, this class has already outgrown its quarters in the church.

Adult Bible classes, whether men's or women's, should be interested in the social conditions of the community. They should study these matters and be ready to aid in any way possible. They should be especially interested in anything pertaining to the child life of the community, for instance, wholesome recreational activities, or the removal of any menace to public health.

They should seek to promote all welfare work and constructive enterprises, and to relieve distress of every sort. Every earnest pastor desires his church to be a community force. This can be accomplished more

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readily through the adult Bible classes than through any other medium. The adult classes are ready to give expression to the impressions gained from their class Bible study. They are eager to put into practice some of the great principles of life which the Bible presents. They are standing at the door of opportunity, which opens outward, leading to larger fields of service, and they are saying, "Here am I; send me."

## CHAPTER XV

### *Activities of the Class*

Some activities of the organized adult Bible class in its relation to the Sunday school and church are mentioned in Chapters XII and XIII. The object of this chapter is simply to offer some practical suggestions which may be helpful to classes that are looking for new forms of service.

An adult Bible class can do a fine piece of constructive work by assuming the responsibility of the Home Department of the Sunday school. No form of service produces greater results, for this means carrying the Sunday school into the homes of the community and offers untold opportunity for personal work and Christian service. Many persons are brought into the Sunday school and church through the Home Department, yet this is often the most neglected department of the school.

A class of young women led a devotional service each month at the Florence Crittenden Home in their city. One of their number became so interested in the work among the girls of the home that she agreed to teach them the Sunday-school lesson every Sunday afternoon. Through her interest and consecrated effort many of



those unfortunate girls were led to Christ and went out of the home to lead earnest, Christian lives.

A class of young men placed an electrical lighting system in their church. Another young men's class in a down-town church, located in a rooming-house district, conducts a Sunday afternoon social hour in the classroom, just before the young people's meeting. They serve rolls and hot chocolate or coffee, and invite all the young men of the neighborhood to "drop in." This class also maintains an employment bureau and endeavors to provide employment for any young man who is out of work.

A men's class in a rural community built and equipped a "community building," to be used for socials, gymnasium work, and so forth. They also provided clean motion pictures once each week for the young people of the village.

A young woman came from a small town to a large city to earn her living and to help her mother, who was taking in washing and doing housework, to support three younger children and keep them in school. Shortly after the young woman came to the city she attended a near-by church and was invited to join the young women's Bible class. She did so, and soon became eager to take an active part in the work of the class. Before her first winter in the city had passed, she was stricken with that dread disease, tuberculosis. The doctor told her that she must go at once to the tuberculosis sanitarium. She was absolutely without funds, but she called on the class teacher and talked the

matter over. The result was that she secured entrance at the hospital as a free patient. The class took the responsibility of providing for her needs, and during her stay of one year in the hospital she lacked nothing. At the end of the year the doctor pronounced her case hopeless and advised that she be sent home to her mother. The class provided for the expenses of the home trip, sending the teacher with her, that their fellow member might have the best of care and attention on the way. The girl lived only three weeks after reaching home, but before she died she gave this testimony: "I never knew what Christ really meant until I joined that Bible class."

A class of thirty men supports a Christian student at Peking University. A class of women supports a scholarship in China and gives a regular contribution each year to one of the city hospitals.

An ambitious women's class reports that they visit shut-in mothers, give social evenings to teen-age classes, helped to organize a men's class, and raised a special fund for missions.

Another class bought a new piano and carpet for the Sunday school.

A class of young men sent a Christmas present of one hundred dollars to one of their number who was working his way through college.

There are many practical ways in which an adult Bible class may be of service to others, as well as to the Sunday school and the church of which it is a part. These suggestions are selected from personal recollec-

tion and knowledge. The organized class stands today as one of the greatest forces of Christianity, upholding by its strength both Sunday school and church, and lending its influence to every movement that stands for righteousness and justice.

## CHAPTER XVI

### *The Class and Foreign Missions*

Some nineteen hundred years ago, on the summit of a mountain in Galilee, the first men's Bible class gathered around their Teacher. An atmosphere of expectancy surrounded the group. Something was about to happen. They were questioning their Teacher about the restoration of the Kingdom, for which they were all longing. He replied: "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath sent within his own authority. But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." And when he had spoken thus, "a cloud received him out of their sight."

What was the result? That men's class obeyed the command of their Teacher. They went everywhere preaching the gospel, until, as a result of their activity, practically all of the known world was at least touched by the message within one generation.

Is not this a lesson for the adult Bible class of to-day? We have shown in previous chapters how it may serve the Sunday school, the church, the community; but what of the world? What is God's world-wide pro-

gram? That every nation, every city, every village, every individual, shall be reached with the gospel! Has the adult Bible class a place in this program? Rather should we ask, How can the adult Bible class exist and not recognize its responsibility in this most important matter?

Surely the adult Bible class has a place in God's world-wide program, for as students of God's Word the members have placed upon them the responsibility of obeying God's commands. The command, "Ye shall be my witnesses," is clear and definite, and is not limited as to place. "Unto the uttermost part of the earth," then, must the adult Bible class go with the message. How this may be done is the next point to consider.

There should be a carefully selected Missionary Committee. The chairman should have not only the missionary vision but also the happy faculty of imparting it to others; he should be well informed on missionary activities and needs, and be able to talk about them in an interesting, and not a dry-as-dust, manner. There should be a definite missionary program for the class. This means a missionary budget and definite missionary giving and education. There are many ways in which definite missionary instruction may be given and missionary interest maintained. For instance, a bulletin board may be kept in the classroom, on which are placed pictures and clippings. The chairman should see that these are changed frequently and kept fresh. Missionary magazines should be taken by the class and

kept on the reading table in the classroom ; the missionary chairman should call attention to any article of special interest. If a class supports its own missionary, or native worker, it should keep closely in touch with his particular station by correspondence, and the letters received will always be interesting reading for the class.

The average adult will not give liberally to missions until he is interested in them, and to be interested he must know something about them. He should become familiar with the stories of the great pioneers and leaders in missionary work. He must be induced to read some good missionary books; in order to accomplish this, it may be necessary for the class to invest in a small missionary library. This will be a good investment, for, very often, in this way only can members of the class be induced to read for themselves. Some systematic mission study should be provided for the class. It may be possible during the winter months to take a six or eight weeks' course in one of the mission study books, with class meetings once each week, or once in two weeks, at the home of one of the members. With a keen, earnest leader, interest will be maintained and much missionary enthusiasm will result.

The ignorance of the average individual on the subject of missions is deplorable. The author once stood before a class of young women, most of them high-school graduates and all past twenty, and asked how many had ever heard of John R. Mott. Not a hand was raised, not a glimmer of intelligence flickered

across a single countenance. Yet, when they were told something of the man, something of his wonderful work and earnest, consecrated life, they were all eager to read some of his books and to know more about him.

The teacher can do much to keep the missionary fires burning. He should never lose an opportunity of applying the Bible lesson to missions. The Bible is a missionary book, and cannot be honestly taught without teaching missions, although some teachers manage to present Bible lessons with no missionary message whatever. A Sunday-school teacher was once asked if she ever presented a missionary lesson to the class. She said, "No, I am not interested in missions." When asked what she was teaching, she replied, "The Acts." The lesson is obvious.

The adult Bible class should be well informed on all subjects pertaining to the Kingdom on earth. The younger classes should be always on the alert for missionary volunteers in their midst. Nothing so adds to the missionary interest of a class as to have one of their own number volunteer for service. There is no difficulty then in maintaining interest in missions. That missionary becomes the special object of prayer and support, and fortunate indeed is such a class.

There should be definite prayer for missions in the class. The teacher and the missionary chairman can do much to emphasize this very important matter. The value of intercessory prayer, to the missionaries and to the one who prays, cannot be overestimated. It means

the development of the spiritual life. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," and the adult Bible class that really practices intercessory prayer will be a deeply spiritual class, full of good works and a power in the field.

What an influence the organized adult Bible class can exert on the individual member, on the school, on the church, on the community, and on the world itself! Surely the movement which began so insignificantly years ago is of God and will therefore endure. It is a blessed task to teach an adult Bible class, a task fraught with countless possibilities and with results that only eternity will reveal.

It is also a blessed task to be a member of the class, with a vision of class possibilities, and to go out from the class into other fields of service, a stronger, better, more earnest, Christian worker.

May God continue to bless the organized adult Bible class, and may it be in the future a still more potent force for righteousness than it has been in the past!



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